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White House 'elf' digests news

By Carol Pugh
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WASHINGTON — Bruce Young compares himself to one of those toad-like characters in the fantasy tales who sneaks in during the night and fixes shoes for the poor old cobbler.

The toad-like characters were called Norns in Norse mythology. Bruce Young is called a White House aide.

And benefiting from his late-night activities is the president of the United States.

The 22-year-old Young produces the White House News Summary, one of the few documents reaching President Reagan directly.

What Young assembles dur-

ing the night, President Reagan sees with his breakfast every weekday morning. Top policy-makers also receive copies. So do 175 other administration officials.

The News Summary is a report of about 25 to 30 letter-size pages duplicated and machine-stapled. It condenses what the press has to say about events involving the administration.

To prepare it, Young reads through four papers — *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*. He monitors five wire services — Associated Press, United Press International, Gannett News Service, Reuters and the Chicago Sun-Times Wire — for stories about the president,

his Cabinet and advisers.

Young will quote verbatim the major items in the news stories. He underlines the headline and lists the writer and newspaper.

Young includes the bitter and the sweet, even if it's something the president might not want to wake up to.

He says he places "more emphasis on the critical stuff because, in my mind, in that way they know where the fire is coming from."

There are some ground rules. The White House News Summary staff of three never draws the president's attention to stories not directly about the administration.

Young starts work at 10:30 p.m. in the Old Executive Office

Building, next to the White House. By midnight he's on his own with a TV set going.

Around 5 a.m., he starts to duplicate the news summaries, usually finishing just before 7.

"It's like firing an artillery barrage," Young said of his 7 a.m. deliveries of the news summary. "They're landing all over the place."

Young, a 1982 journalism graduate from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va., started the job last May.

He landed the job after hearing that an acquaintance on the staff was leaving. After sending his application to the editor, Bill Hart, he was interviewed by Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes, who makes the final decision on hirings.



By Lee Anderson

YOUNG: On the lookout for news for President Reagan.